

Connection to Hebrews 3:1-19

The Israelites were commanded to rest on the Sabbath and on other Holy Days. This rest was to be better realized upon entry into the promised land – a land God had chosen and was preparing for them. Like He did for the Israelites, God is at work preparing an even better place where a permanent rest awaits. He now prepares all believers to serve Him as priests eternally.

Introduction/Opening:

Illustration: Relate the idea of a bedtime routine for a child (perhaps a specific story from your childhood or one of your children, if applicable).

Children often resist bedtime. Routines may help, but most children, at some point early in life, get the sense that they're missing out on something when put down for the night. Of course, parents know that the rest is good. It's necessary. But still, the child resists.

Likewise, our Father knows we need rest. He offers it both now and eternally. Yet, just like a parent and child on earth, our Father's idea of rest and our idea might be very different.

Outline

1. God commanded rest to the Israelites. (Exodus 20:8-11)
The Israelites had served as slaves and had not been allowed to worship on a weekly basis. (See Mark 2:23-28 for a New Testament understanding)
2. Jesus offers rest to those who are weary. (Matthew 11:28-30)
Jesus offered a rest that was not possible for those burdened by keeping the Law.
3. Eternal rest is coming for those who believe. (Hebrews 3:16-19)
Our rest will come later. We're called to serve (Ephesians 2:10) and to do so while it's still day (John 9:4). As priests of God (1 Peter 2:9-10), we serve Him now that we're prepared to serve Him eternally. But our service then (and hopefully now) isn't tedious, rather it's out of love and appreciation for what He has done for us.

Contrast obedience to the Lord with the rebellion of Hebrews 3:16-19

Conclusion

Moses was one of God's greatest servants. Yet, he didn't enter into the promised land of rest. What must've been going through Moses' mind when God took him up Mount Nebo to overlook the promised land.

As we read Hebrews 3:16-19, we discover a great irony. Everyone heard. Everyone knew. Everyone would've said they believed. But few entered the rest.

Likewise, on judgment day, many will say they had heard of Jesus. Many will say they knew Jesus. Many will claim to have believed in Jesus. But few will enter into an eternal rest.

What keeps you from entering the rest God wants to give you?

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